



What does sustainable mean?

At its most basic level, sustainable means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Focus on Sustainable Schools

From Ecology's Solid Waste and Financial Assistance Program, Statewide Resources Section

One of the most critical issues that will face the school-age children of today will be the quality of the world they inherit. A school that both teaches and practices environmentally sustainable behavior will offer children and the local community important role models and provide them knowledge and skills that will help them better understand and respond to our rapidly changing world.

In practice, however, other education priorities have made it very difficult for teachers and schools to take on these responsibilities. In many cases there may only be one teacher willing to take on the extra tasks and responsibilities. Without further support these teachers often find the process difficult and time consuming. Teaching sustainability principles need not be a separate course. In fact, it might work better if they were treated as overriding principles incorporated into all studies.

How can your school reduce its environmental impact?

Following are some elements that schools can implement to help them on the way towards sustainability.

- Growing or purchasing organic food for lunches.
- Reducing meat in lunches or offering vegetarian options.
- Purchasing bulk items with minimal or no packaging.
- Making compost out of lawn clippings, garden/yard trimmings and cafeteria wastes.
- Selling school-grown organic food.
- Selling the school-generated compost.
- Using renewable energy such as solar power.
- Choosing the least toxic means of effective pest and weed control.
- Using biodegradable soaps and other environmentally friendly cleaning supplies.
- Teaching accounting or budgeting in a new way, factoring in environmental costs of business.
- Operating a school "swap shop" where kids and teachers can bring used items to trade or donate.
- Continuing "traditional" waste reduction and recycling practices (such as reducing, reusing, and recycling)

How can Ecology help your school?

Ecology supports schools that embrace these principles through the Terry Husseman Sustainable Schools Awards Program. Ecology also has staff across the state prepared to assist schools with their sustainability programs. Ecology staff can help schools perform waste audits and find the resources to develop school or district-wide waste-reduction and recycling programs.



Ecology provides cash incentive to schools through the Terry Husseman Sustainable School Awards program. This award program recognizes schools for their successes managing materials and wastes in a sustainable fashion.

All Washington State public schools (K-12) are eligible and strongly encouraged to apply for an award. Awards can be as high as \$5,000. Altogether, Ecology plans to distribute as much as \$20,000 among the winners in a particular year. The awards are presented at a semi-formal ceremony hosted by the Department of Ecology.

Sustainable School Program

To compete successfully in this category a school would exhibit program elements in at least three of the five areas identified below. Additional program elements may also be proposed by a school if they contribute to sustainability in schools.

1. Resource/Energy Conservation
2. Biological Diversity
3. Waste & Toxicity Reduction
4. Social Harmony
5. Health & Wellness

Seed Award

The intent of this category is to encourage schools to take some first steps necessary to embrace the five areas of sustainability. This award can assist with costs involved in initial start-up of basic sustainability programs or improvements of existing programs or projects that move them closer to sustainability. Schools can apply for assistance to, among other things:

- Purchase equipment needed for sustainability programs and educational material.
- Implement or expand sustainable activities.
- Incorporate sustainability lessons into the regular teaching curriculum, which meet the goals established by the State of Washington Environmental Learning Standards.

For additional details, please refer to Ecology's "How-to Manual for Implementing Sustainability in Your School," publication number 02-07-022, <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0207022.html>

Creative Environmental Curriculum

The intent of this category is to recognize original curricula that:

- Introduce students, teachers, staff, & administrators to the concepts of sustainability including its social, economic, & environmental relevance.
- Strive to instill a sense of environmental stewardship in the students.

Additional Information

If you are interested in getting your school on the path to environmental sustainability and would like more information, please visit our website at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/terryhusseman.html> or contact:

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Schools interested in starting or improving upon their school sustainability program can find helpful information in Ecology's "How-to Manual for Implementing Sustainability in Your School," publication number 02-07-022, <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0207022.html>

If you require this publication in an alternate format, please contact the Solid Waste & Financial Assistance Program at 360-407-6900 or TTY (for the speech or hearing impaired) at 711 or 1-800-833-6388.